

To,
California Department of Education
1430 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-5901

From,
Shruti Ranade
1197 Johnson Ave San Jose, CA 95129

Respected Members of Instructional Quality Commission, History Social Science Subject matter committee,

I have sent you this letter to inform you about the wrong interpretations of the Hindu culture in the California history/social studies textbooks. "Religious music and art, for example, may be included in instructional materials when appropriate." This is an excerpt from the Standards for Evaluating Instructional Materials for Social Content. To keep it plain and simple, why is it that this clause is not being recognized? As I have finished the Ancient India chapter in my sixth grade textbook, I think back, and I don't remember reading about the many art forms of the Hindu culture.

In the Hindu culture, art is specified into three important groups, dance, singing, and instrumental music. As I recall, none of these aspects of the culture are included in the history textbook, even though all of these three aspects are what strengthen the Hindu culture to formulate the millions of accomplishments it has done till this day. Indian classical dance, for example, takes 7 or more years of committed and diligent practice. These dancers do not just dance a specific and unique style of dance for their pleasure. They dedicate their lives, and while doing that, empower themselves. They learn how to be confident, even when they mess up. They know that if they lose their focus for one small beat, they did not put in all their effort, and will need to do it again. Dance not only teaches you how to focus, but also discipline, self-confidence, independence, teamwork, and perseverance.

Even with all the accomplishments Indian arts have brought, there is no mention of them in textbooks. As the clause clearly states, though, "Religious music and art, for example, may be included in instructional materials when appropriate," dance, singing, and/or instrumental music should be included in these history textbooks. The point of a history textbook is to teach the child the wonders of their own religion, not make them ashamed of the incorrect facts that are given to them by a textbook they should be trusting. When Hindu's read this textbook, believe or not, that is exactly how they feel. I have felt that way, but I don't want others too. I want them to be proud of their Hindu religion. I want them to realize that this faulty information being given to them is not what their magnificent religion really is. I want them to know the *real* truth.

Thank you for your attention,

Shruti Ranade